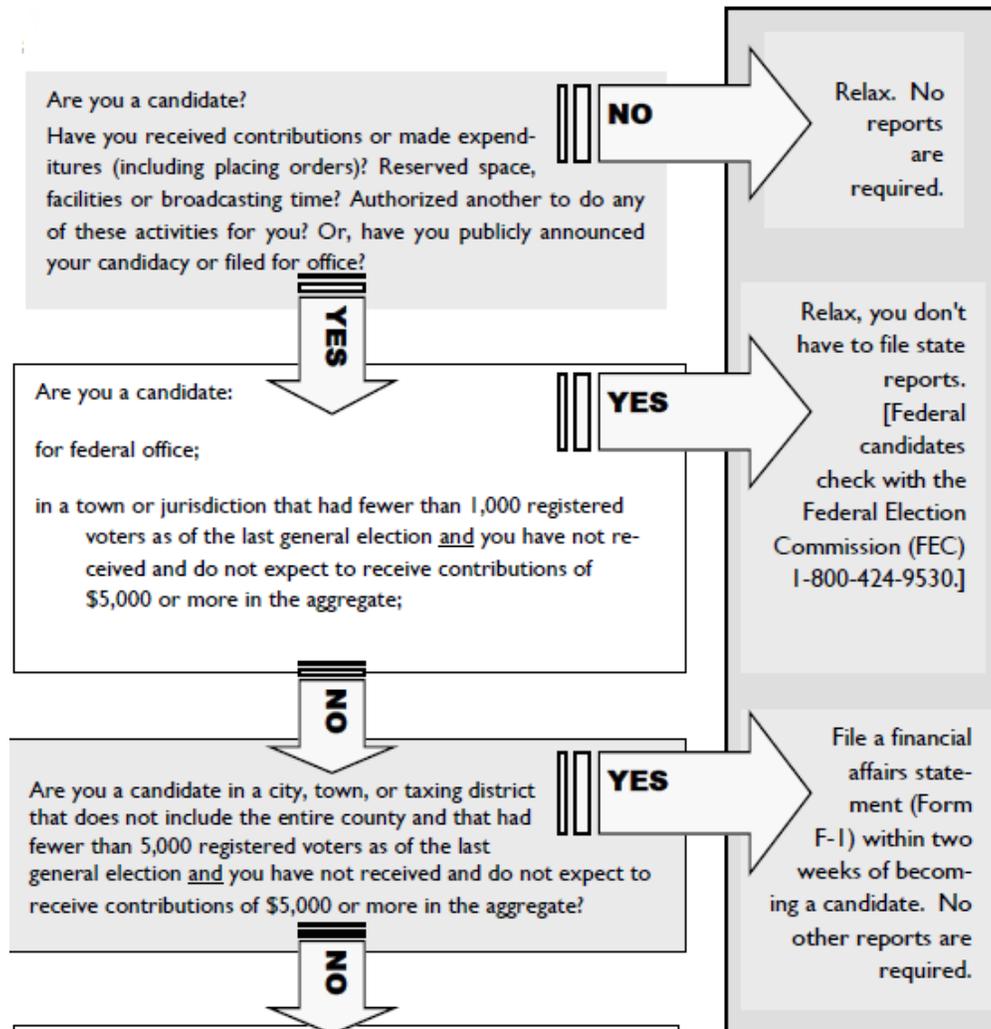


Candidate's Guide to Reporting



File a financial affairs report (Form F-1) within two weeks of becoming a candidate.

AND

For your election campaign will you raise and spend:

\$0 to \$5,000
(& receive \$500 or less from any donor)

USE MINI REPORTING:
File Forms F-1 and C-1 within two weeks of becoming a candidate.
No other reports are required.

Over \$5,000

USE FULL REPORTING: File Forms F-1 and C-1 within two weeks of becoming a candidate. File C-3 and C-4 reports according to the Full Reporting Schedule included in this pamphlet. C-3 and C-4 reports must be E-filed.

Reports Required Summary

Option	F-1	C-1	C-3	C-4
MINI	Yes	Yes	No	No
FULL	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

See Full Reporting Schedule

F-1 is due within two weeks of becoming a candidate.
C-1 is due within two weeks of becoming a candidate.
All PDC reports can be filed electronically.
C-3 and C-4 reports must be filed electronically.
Find e-filing applications and software at www.pdc.wa.gov.

Are Disclosure Reports Required?

Step 1: Determine if the candidate must register the campaign or disclose personal financial information.

Multiple factors determine whether a candidate running for state, local, or judicial office must register a campaign and disclosure to the public campaign contributions and expenditures. Candidates seeking election to a federal office are regulated by the [Federal Elections Commission](#).

The first step is understanding that an individual becomes a candidate upon doing any one of these activities:

- Accepting a campaign contribution,
- Spending money on the campaign,
- Reserving space, facilities, or placing orders and committing to pay for services or supplies for the campaign,
- Authorizing someone else to do any of the above,
- Publicly announcing candidacy, or
- Filing a declaration of candidacy.

Most candidates must disclose personal financial information about themselves, their spouse or registered domestic partner, and dependents. Some candidates must register the campaign with the Public Disclosure Commission. Filing requirements are determined by the office sought and how much money the candidate expects to raise and spend:

- A candidate for state office must file the [registration \(PDC Form C-1\)](#) and [personal financial affairs statement \(PDC Form F-1\)](#).
- A candidate for local office that covers an entire county must file the registration (PDC Form C-1) and personal financial affairs statement (PDC Form F-1).
- A candidate for a local office that does not include the entire county files the F-1, if there are at least 1,000 registered voters in the jurisdiction. The candidate also files the C-1 if there are at least 5,000 registered voters in the jurisdiction or the candidate expects to raise \$5,000 for the campaign.

The C-1 and F-1 are due within two weeks of becoming a candidate. Forms are at www.pdc.wa.gov.

Step 2: Determine if the candidate must report the campaign's contributions and expenditures.

Only those candidates who must register their campaigns will have to determine whether they will go on to disclose contributions and expenditures. The Public Disclosure Commission has created the **mini reporting option** for candidates who raise and spend \$0 - \$5,000.

Mini reporting allows a candidate to raise and spend up to \$5,000 without filing contribution or expenditure reports, so long as no more than \$500 is received from a single contributor. There are two exceptions to the \$500 aggregate contribution limit: (1) a bona fide party committee may pay the candidate's filing fee and (2) the candidate's personal contribution is not limited to \$500. There are no exceptions to the \$5,000 mini reporting threshold. This option should be selected only after a candidate has carefully considering how much money the campaign will need to raise and spend and are certain the limitations will not be exceeded.

A candidate who is unsure how much money will be raised or does not wish to limit how much money the campaign may raise and spend overall should select the **full reporting option**. Selecting full reporting means that the candidate must file regular reports disclosing contributions and expenditures.

Bank Account

A candidate must open a bank account upon receiving a monetary contribution. Monetary contributions must be deposited within five business days of receipt. The name on the account should be the campaign committee name on the C-1. Most banks will require the candidate to have an Employer Identification Number, which is obtained from the Internal Revenue Service. (The PDC's Candidate manual explains IRS contact options.)

Electronic Filing

A candidate that spends - or expects to spend - at least \$5,000 in the current campaign or who spent at least \$5,000 in the last campaign for the same office must file campaign finance reports electronically. The PDC's [free ORCA software](#) can be installed and used by candidates to fulfill the electronic filing requirement. The PDC also has online applications for filing the [C-1](#) and [F-1](#).

Reports & Due Dates

The Index of Forms explains the purpose of each report and when it is due. [The PDC calendar shows actual report due dates](#). Reporting dates are also programmed into the ORCA software. Generally,

- Deposits or expenditures made before the campaign registers are disclosed when the C-1 is filed.
- Through May of the election year, deposits and expenditures are reported on the 10th of each month. A candidate that deposits or spends less than \$200 in a month, can choose not to file a monthly report until the contributions or expenditures to be reported exceed \$200. A candidate who does not appear on the primary election ballot continues to file monthly reports through the end of August.
- Starting in June, each deposit is reported on the following Monday.
- Expenditure reports are filed 21 and 7 days before the election and on the 10th of the month following the election.

Additionally, during the week before the primary election and the three weeks before the general election, a candidate must file a special report within 48 hours of receiving \$1,000 or more from a single source in the aggregate during the special reporting period. Any contributions received outside of the special reporting period do not count towards the \$1,000 threshold.

Campaign Books

The key to complying with campaign disclosure requirements is to keep detailed records of each contributions and expenditure and file reports on time. **Keep all campaign records for five years after the election.** Campaign books include bank statements, deposit slips, canceled checks, checkbook register as well as receipts, invoices, copies of contribution checks, notes or documents regarding orders placed or loans, etc. A ledger, journal, or similar record may be maintained to identify contributions (contributor information, amount, and date received) and expenditures (vendor, item or service provided, and cost).

Campaign books must be available for public inspection during the last eight days before an election.

Campaign Contributions

Voters passed I-276 to establish the Public Disclosure Commission and Washington's disclosure requirements as a means for making government more transparent and creating a mechanism that allowed the public to follow the money" in campaigns. Campaigns should take care to record each contribution that it receives. **The allowed limit for a cash - actual currency - contributions is \$100.** A contribution bigger than that must be made by written instrument. **A candidate may keep aggregate anonymous contributions up to \$300 or 1% of the total contributions received, whichever is greater.** If a candidate receives excess anonymous contributions, money is be deposited and then turned over to the state by sending to the PDC a campaign check for the excess amount made payable to the State General Fund.

No more than \$5,000 may be accepted by a legislative or local office candidate from a single source other than a bona fide state party committee during the last 21 days before a general election. The threshold increases to \$50,000 for a Supreme Court or state executive office candidate. Contribution limits enacted by voters in 1992 prevent most candidates from receiving contributions anywhere near these thresholds from a contributor other than a bona fide party committee. The limits for contributors other than party or caucus campaign committees are:

AMOUNT PER ELECTION	OFFICE SOUGHT
\$2,000	State Executive Judicial Office Port Commissioner*
\$1,000	State Senator or Representative County Office Mayor, City Council School Director Hospital Commissioner**

Deposit campaign contributions within five business days of receipt.

"Per election" means each time the candidate's name is on the ballot. The *candidate manual* contains very complete information about when contributions may be received, how to handle contributions received for an election where the candidate will not appear on the ballot, what to do with contributions when the candidate decides to run for a different office or otherwise end the campaign before the election, and many other situations.

Bona fide political party and caucus campaign committees' limits are determined by the number of registered voters in the jurisdiction where the candidate seeks office and are found *here*.

Candidates for mayor and city council should check with the city's clerk to learn whether the city has enacted lower limits that the city enforces. There are no contribution limits in effect for candidates running for local offices that are not listed here.

* Only candidates running for commissioner of Ports of Seattle or Tacoma are subject to limits (districts with more than 200,000 registered voters).

** Only candidates running for commissioner in King County Hospital Districts 1 and 2 and Snohomish County Hospital Dist. 2 (districts with a population exceeding 150,000).

Political Advertising

Generally, political ads of all types must identify the sponsor of the ad. In partisan campaigns, all ads must contain the candidate's party preference. *Details about these and other requirements can be found in the [Political Advertising brochure](#).*

This brochure is intended to be an overview of the subjects with which candidates and their campaign treasurers should become familiar. Candidates should refer to the online manuals for more complete instructions. The information contained in online instructions has been distilled from the requirements set out in RCW 42.17A and Title 390 WAC, as well as the Public Disclosure Commission's declaratory orders and interpretations. Care has been taken to make the instructions accurate and concise. Nevertheless, the instructions cannot be substituted for the applicable laws and rules